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Message Text

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42
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
---------- 059623
R 111337Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2782
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USNMR SHAPE
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 14881

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: US, GW, PARM, NATO
SUBJECT: MBFR: GERMAN UNEASINESS ABOUT FUTURE
DIRECTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 210583
(B) BONN 14549

BEGIN SUMMARY

AS THE CRUCIAL DECISIONS ON MBFR NUCLEAR ISSUES LOOM NEARER, WE SENSE THAT THE FRG IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT NEW US POLICY DEPARTURES MIGHT RESULT IN THE GERMANS BEING FORCED TO ACCEPT POSITIONS NOT IN THEIR NATIONAL INTEREST. SINCE THE GERMAN ROLE IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF MBFR, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE EMPHASIS ON A CONTINUING, CLOSE AND FRANK DIA-LOGUE WITH THE FRG ON THESE MATTERS CANNOT BE OVERSTRESSED.

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END SUMMARY

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1. THE INTERNAL ALLIANCE NEGOTIATIONS ON MBFR HAVE ENTERED A CRUCIAL PHASE ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WILL SOON HAVE TO OBTAIN MINISTERIAL-LEVEL APPROVAL FOR THE FINAL ALLIANCE POSITION ON HOW OPTION III IS TO BE PLAYED. THEN, ONCE TABLED IN VIENNA, THE EASTERN REACTION WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED AGAINST AGREED WESTERN NEGOTIATING GOALS.

2. AS WE ENTER THIS PERIOD, ADDRESSEES ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE FREQUENT GERMAN INSISTENCE ON VARIOUS ASSURANCES REGARDING THE FUTURE HANDLING OF THE ISSUE. THESE HAVE RANGED FROM SUGGESTIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HANDLING TO DEMANDS FOR ASSURANCES THAT OUR NUCLEAR OFFER REPRESENT-A FINAL NEGOTIATING POSITION.

3. WHILE AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE OPTION, THE GERMANS ARE AT THE SAME TIME STRIVING TO OBTAIN AS IRONCLAD AN UNDERSTANDING AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO SET THE ALLIANCE POSITION IN CONCRETE. THE REACTION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST THAT THE GERMANS WITHDRAW SOME OF THEIR LANGUAGE FROM THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENT (REFTELS) VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATED FRG FEARS THAT US OR ALLIANCE GOALS MAY CHANGE OR THAT ONE "UNIQUE" OFFER MAY BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER, PARTICULARLY IF THE US PERCEIVES IT TO BE IN THE AMERICAN INTEREST. THUS, THE GERMANS ARE PREPARED TO GO TO THE MAT WITH THE US ON THE VARIOUS POINTS IN THE DRAFT GUIDANCE AND SUPPLEMENT. THE OVERALL THRUST OF THE GERMAN ARGUMENTATION IS TO PREEMPT THE FUTURE POSSIBILITY THAT CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO AN ALLIANCE POSITION ESSENTIALLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE FRG.

4. THE EMBASSY'S SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT THESE GERMAN POSITIONS ARE ONLY SURFACE MANIFESTATIONS OF A DEEPER ANXIETY. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN HEARING EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM VARIOUS GERMAN

SOURCES REGARDING THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF AMERICAN MBFR POLICY IF AND WHEN A CRUNCH COMES. IN VIEW OF THE KEY GERMAN ROLE IN MBFR, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE NATURE OF THESE CONCERNS, SINCE FRG DECISIONS ON MBFR MAY IMPINGE DIRECTLY ON THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE TALKS.

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USDEL MBFR VIENNA
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5. THE GERMANS ARE VERY MUCH AWARE THAT A POLICY REVIEW IS UNDERWAY IN WASHINGTON. THEY ARE PUZZLED AND SLIGHTLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT US SILENCE ON THIS SUBJECT AND ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH MAY BE DRAWN FROM THE REVIEW. THE GERMANS ARE FEARFUL THAT THE US MAY EVENTUALLY RESORT TO A POWER PLAY TO GET THE FRG TO ACCEPT SOMETHING -- WHETHER NATIONAL SUB-CEILINGS, AIR MANPOWER REDUCTIONS, OR EQUIPMENT LIMITATIONS -- WHICH IS NOT IN THE GERMAN INTEREST. IN EFFECT, THERE IS THE NAGGING FEELING THAT SUCCESS IN MBFR MIGHT BE PURCHASED AT GERMAN EXPENSE.

6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALT, MBFR AND DETENTE IS AN AREA TO WHICH THE GERMANS HAVE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT. FRG OFFICIALS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT THE SUCCESS OF SALT II MUST BE ASSURED FIRST BEFORE REAL PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE ON MBFR. THEY HAVE NEVER TOLD US PRECISELY WHY THEY FAVOR THIS SEQUENCE. WE SPECULATE THAT THE GERMANS MAY BELIEVE THE SUPER-

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POWERS MUST WORK OUT THEIR GLOBAL STRATEGIC BALANCE
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BEFORE A EUROPEAN BALANCE CAN BE STRUCK. ALTERNATIVELY, THE GERMANS MAY FEAR THAT ANY EROSION IN THE CREDIBILITY OF THE US DETERRENT BROUGHT ABOUT BY A SALT AGREEMENT WOULD PLACE GREATER WEIGHT ON THE RELATIVE EUROPEAN BALANCE -- PRECISELY THE SUBJECT OF MBFR. THE GERMANS HAVE A VOICE IN THOSE TALKS, BUT NOT IN THE SALT, AND THEY WOULD PRESUMABLY PREFER TO USE THAT VOICE AFTER THEY HAVE SEEN THE SALT RESULTS, RATHER THAN TO SEE THE SALT DECISIONS FOLLOW -- AND AFFECT -- THE DECISIONS IN WHICH THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED.

7. THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT ALSO FACES A GROWING POLITICAL RISK IN MBFR. "DETENTE" IS NO LONGER A MAGIC WORD IN GERMANY. EACH DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENT MUST BE MORE FULLY ADDRESSED -- AND DEFENDED AGAINST AN INCREASINGLY SKEPTICAL PUBLIC -- ON ITS OWN MERITS RATHER THAN AS PART OF A VITAL PROCESS. IN 1976, THERE WILL BE ELECTIONS IN GERMANY ONE MONTH BEFORE THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES. IF THE UNITED STATES PUSHES FOR AN MBFR AGREEMENT THAT COULD BE SERIOUSLY ATTACKED BY A CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION IN GERMANY, SCHMIDT WOULD BE FORCED TO RESIST US OR TORISK LOSING THE ELECTION. THE GERMANS DO NOT WISH TO BE FACED WITH THIS CHOICE.

8. THE GERMANS HAVE REITERATED TIME AND AGAIN THAT THEY ARE NOT TRYING TO PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION OF OPTION III. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, AND DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER MET IN JUNE AND APPROVED THE OVERALL FRG APPROACH TO OPTION III ISSUES AT THAT TIME. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY ONE OF THEM HAS FOLLOWED MBFR MUCH SINCE. EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, THE FEDERAL SECURITY COUNCIL, A CABINET COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY THE CHANCELLOR AND WHOSE OTHER MEMBERS INCLUDE THE MINISTERS OF FOREIQN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, FINANCE, ECONOMICS AND INTERIOR, MUST APPROVE THE ALLIANCE POSITION REGARDINO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR OPTION. THEY WILL ALSO NEED TO APPROVE THE FINAL AGREEMENT.

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9. GIVEN THE ABOVE GERMAN MISGIVINGS -- BOTH ARTICULATED AND IMPLIED -- THE EMBASSY BELIEVES WE WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO MAINTAIN AS CLOSE AND FRANK A DIALOGUE WITH THE GERMANS AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE IF THE US MBFR POLICY REVIEW SHOULD RESULT IN ANY NEW DEPARTURES.
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